



**Madison  
Children's  
Museum**

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Ruth G. Shelly, **Executive Director**

February 5, 2010

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
U.S. Congress  
2446 Rayburn Building  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman:

The administration and Board of Directors of Madison Children's Museum (MCM) express their wholehearted endorsement of the requested FY2011 appropriation for *Arts for All*, a program providing therapeutic support, education, and recreation for families facing early-stage Alzheimer's.

This program will directly benefit the more than 6,400 elders in Dane County with Alzheimer's disease. However, because this is an intergenerational program, these elders' children and grandchildren will also benefit from a program that addresses the impact of Alzheimer's on an entire family. The *Arts for All* activities provide engagement and mental stimulation for the person with Alzheimer's--but also provide support and respite for the adult child caregiver, and sensitive orientation for children who may be confused and scared by the disease affecting their grandparents or elderly neighbors.

In 2009, the Helen Bader Foundation awarded planning grants to eight Wisconsin and two Minnesota museums to initiate programs for people with Alzheimer's. Madison Children's Museum is the only children's museum among them, and the only one to focus on intergenerational programming. Thus Madison Children's Museum is already in a state-wide network of museums with Alzheimer programs to ensure success. However, MCM will also serve as a model for the other eight children's museums in Wisconsin that may elect to expand their outreach to Alzheimer elders, extending the potential impact of this programming to the 116,000 people with Alzheimer's in the state.

In a challenging economy, this appropriation represents a strategic and cost-effective investment of taxpayer dollars.

- First, the planning for this program has already been funded and, by the time of implementation with appropriation funds, the program will have been evaluated, refined, and perfected.
- Second, the therapy afforded Alzheimer elders in the children's museum setting demonstrates use of an existing non-medical facility that can be cost-effectively adapted for therapeutic purposes. The museum plans to use the space created for this program for other special-needs audiences, such as children with autism, who need the same quiet and safe surroundings for successful interaction.
- Third, the program is easily replicated by other museums and already enjoys the complementary funding of private philanthropy.

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- Finally, the program stretches precious health care dollars by providing effective therapy in a group setting--not only lowering the cost of therapy per patient, but also doing so in a manner where the group is part of the therapy for social interaction and total family support.

Madison Children's Museum is more than a place to learn through play—the museum also takes its role seriously as being an agent for social change. MCM has consistently shown leadership in championing the needs of Wisconsonites who, like elders with Alzheimer's and their families, can be easily overlooked during a time of economic stress. We are grateful to Representative Baldwin for her shared concern in providing cost-effective health care and therapy to those in our state who need it most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth G. Shelly". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Ruth G. Shelly  
Executive Director